

Devotion, Week of December 7, 2025

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Isaiah 9:6:

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
Authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This past Sunday we celebrated the theme of Peace. This is also the fourth name for the Messiah mentioned in Isaiah: Prince of Peace. This concept provides me so much comfort – a son of the King of everything, and a son who brings *shalom*. That is the Hebrew word here for “peace.” *Shalom* means much more than just absence of war, or a feeling internally of peace with oneself or the world. *Shalom* means wholeness. When a Jew greets another Jew with this word, it is a hope that the other person experiences a sense of integration with all of life – that everything around the person supports a sense of being one with God’s creation. It has been the fervent wish of Jews since the earliest time of the Old Testament to build and sustain a world where *shalom* is the guiding principle. When we have *shalom*, we are in harmony with the world around us, and we have a sense of being complete and not lacking in anything. This child Isaiah speaks of will bring *shalom* to the world.

So it makes me wonder – Jesus’ ministry was marked with disagreements with the Jewish authorities, plots to murder him, and betrayal by one of his beloved disciples, Judas, who actually said “*shalom*, rabbi” when he greeted him with a kiss and therefore identified him to the soldiers for arrest. What an awful thought – a word of peace and wholeness used to send Jesus to his death. Jesus’ response was “do what you must do.” *Shalom*, this tentative state of community that Jesus has formed around him, gets shattered with one false greeting and kiss. And we’ve been trying to get to a state of *shalom* ever since. But that’s what the Prince of *Shalom* calls us to work for.

I hope this Advent and Christmas season you experience a sense of *shalom*. It may be more difficult in these days of isolation, pandemic, and economic uncertainty. So I invite you to pause a moment, count your blessings, and thank God for giving us the Prince of *Shalom*, so that we can be about the Father’s business of working for peace.

Jeanne